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THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST'S
INTERNATIONAL NEWS MAGAZINE
FOR THE ATARI™ COMPUTER
USER AND ENTHUSIAST

PUGET SOUND ATARI NEWS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE ATOM, B.R.A.C.E., KC-Ace, "R"-ATARI, S"P"A"C"E,
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The XE Game System & The Computer ATARI'S 8-BIT MARKETING STRATEGY

Atari Corp's Neil Harris replies to a COMPUTAH newsletter editorial
(Reprinted from A.C.E. of Salt Lake City's COMPUTAH, November 1987)

September 25, 1987

Computah
c/o A.C.E. of Salt Lake City
P.O. Box 26664
Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0664

Dear Editor:

In the editorial of your September issue, you take exception with my statement concerning the Atari XE Game System. Since the statement was a brief one, I'd like this opportunity to give you a clearer idea of Atari's position on this system and why it should be a good thing for 8-bit computer owners.

At the time of the formation of the new Atari Corporation in the summer of 1984, the 8-bit line was not faring too well in the mass merchants. It seems that the computers were neglected during the last year or so of Atari Inc. The largest companies selling the computers, such as Sears and K-Mart, had taken the position that the 8-bit Atari computers were dead, and they proceeded to close out their inventories of computers, peripherals, and software at below-cost prices.

Compounding the situation was the set of records that were inherited by the new company. According to our books, many of the big accounts owed us millions of dollars for products shipped. According to their records, though, Atari owed them millions for product returned. When two companies have many millions of dollars in discrepancies on the books, it is very difficult to do business together. In fact, the K-Mart account was finally settled this past summer, fully three years after the new company was formed.

So we have the situation where the product lines were closed out at a loss, and the stores have the attitude that these products are old and dead. In some cases, the buyers at the stores were fired due to the losses they took at the end of the home computer era. These were not just due to Atari -- none of the mass merchants sell "home computers" any more; K-Mart does not (although a few isolated stores buy some Commodores from distributors), J.C. Penneys does not, Montgomery Wards does not, and Sears sells only business computers.

At the current time, Atari U.S. has a substantial supply of 8-bit computers in stock. Very substantial. We have every motivation to sell 8-bit computers. At times we've been accused of trying to kill the line. Why would we want to? Because many of us came from Commodore, where we competed fiercely with Atari? Most of us had substantial respect for the Atari computers as competitors (as opposed to, say, Texas Instruments and Radio Shack). Personally, I have a fair amount of experience in Atari home computers dating back to before I joined Commodore -- check out Compute's First Book of Atari for one of the articles I wrote for them long ago.

Despite our interest in selling 8-bits, they don't sell. During the past three years we've tried advertising, without success. We've released more new 8-bit products than anyone -- DOS 2.5, the XEP80, the SX212, AtariWriter Plus, Atari Planetarium, Silent Butler, Music Painter, Star Raiders II, etc. Not to mention the 65XE and 130XE computers. We are frustrated.

Stores don't want to carry the products. We even offered to let them have the machines without paying for them until they sell! If you know anything about Jack Tramiel, this isn't something he likes to do. But stores value their shelf space, and buyers value their jobs, and we had little success.

On the other hand, there's the video game business. We fully expected video games to be a dead issue upon joining Atari. After all, everyone knew the video game business was dead. At Commodore, we thought we'd killed it! But, we were surprised when the existing inventory of about a million 2600 systems sold during the first year of the new Atari Corporation, without any advertising and with little effort. As a kind of experiment, we built another million machines and sold them during the next year. "Aha," we said to ourselves. "Doesn't look like a dead business to us!"

So we went forward with the 7800 system, for which parts were already available, and lo! and behold, we sold all we could make of them last year also.

Now Nintendo and Sega have jumped in with high-end, \$150 game systems. Nintendo in particular is doing very well indeed. They don't sell as many of these as we sell, but they sell for more money. So Atari took a hard look at the marketplace and determined that we should do a \$150 system as well.

Examining the products, it seems that Nintendo has decent graphics, a light gun, not much of a joystick... and a robot. What does the robot do? Well, it photographs very well in their commercials, but really it doesn't do anything to help in playing games.

For the same \$150, we can provide the consumer with a game system, light gun, three pieces of software -- and a computer-style keyboard. While not as dramatic looking, I'm sure all computer users know that some games just can't be played with a joystick alone. Flight Simulator II, which comes with our XE Game System, needs the keyboard. So do adventure games and most other strategy games.

We can't get stores to carry the 8-bit computers. They won't even sell the software to their existing customers -- for a while software companies had to put the 8-bit programs on the back of the C64 disk to get shelf space at all! But when we showed the XE Game System to the buyers, they were totally enthusiastic.

Puget Sound Atari News

This is truly marketing in action.

We have something like 50 cartridges in inventory from the old days, and are feverishly working on converting disk games to cartridge. With some clever programming, we can now get 256K of ROM on a cartridge, instead of the 16K in the old games. That's how we got Flight Simulator II 'plus' a scenery disk onto a single cartridge. There is nothing different about the XE Game System to make this work -- existing 8-bit computer owners can use the very same cartridges.

So what does this mean to you? In the beginning, all it will mean is that more games will be coming in 8-bit Atari format. But, what we hope is that this will be the springboard to revitalizing the 8-bit Atari computer line. Once the XE Game Systems start selling (and they have just begun arriving in stores this past week), we have a potential market of hundreds of thousands of consumers. At this time Commodore is selling around 300,000 C64's annually. With a market this size, the motivation for software developers to bring out new titles in our format is enormous.

Remember, the XE Game System is totally compatible with your 8-bit computers. Once the customer takes the XE Game System home, they discover in the manual that the system includes the Atari BASIC language and that there is an SIO port for computer peripherals. We expect that people who may have been frightened of computers, or leery of spending the money on a computer with a drive (\$400+) initially, may very well upgrade to a fuller system. And we hope that they will then demand the kind of software that we need to see developed -- serious applications software.

While this is happening, we continue to sell the 8-bit computers. Contrary to some published reports, we cannot simply remove the motherboard from the 65XE's and put them in the Game Systems. It's a different board. So, we still have the large inventory of computers. And we expect that smart Atari dealers will use the advertising campaign for XE Game Systems and sell the computers as a compatible alternative. "Why," they might ask a customer, "should you spend \$150 when you can buy the system *ala carte*, with a computer for \$99 in a more compact case and then buy whatever software you want?"

Let's all hope this works. Atari has tried just about everything in our power to keep the 8-bit computer line going. This is probably our best shot.

One last fact -- for our customers in areas where there are Federated stores, Jack Tramiel has said that these stores will carry a full line of Atari 8-bit computers. So availability should be a whole lot better in California, Texas, Arizona, and Kansas.

Thanks for giving me the time to explain in much more detail than I can online. We've been through some tough times together. Please try to keep the faith and bear with us just a little longer while we get the 8-bit situation straightened out.

Best regards,

Neil Harris

ATARI TREK '88 INFORMATION

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|-----------------|---------------|----------|
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| Vice President: | Jim Chapman | 582-4269 |
| Treasurer: | Rich Coate | 547-0460 |
| Secretary: | Cindy Bowman | 248-2238 |

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Seattle, WA. 98168

Official AT '88 BBS: Bytes & Pieces
(206) 241-8963

Show Dates: May 14th and 15th, 1988

DEAR CHIP

The "New Age" Advisor!

Dear Chip,

I'm having a real hard time, trying to find a Christmas present for my husband. He has all the usual male habits and hobbies. Smokes, drinks, reads Playboy, has a computer, 2 VCRs and enjoys most of the other things, any red blooded American male enjoys. After all the years of knowing him, this is the first year I can't figure out what to get him? Have you got any suggestions??

Sign me,

Stymied in Sequim

Dear Stymied,

If I lived in Sequim, I'd be more than stymied! Hey, there are lots of things you can get him. How about a 52" TV. Besides watching those boring football games, like the Aloha Bowl, etc., you could watch important things, like soap operas. You'd feel like you were there! A tip: Make sure it's stereo. If you've got the room, a pool table would be nice. Sure, you can play pool, but they make great storage areas, too. (I know this from first hand experience!) A two week pass to a fitness club could come in handy. I would go and watch the aerobics. Then go home and show my wife how the ladies down at the club do it. How about a Pictionary game? Don't play women against men, unless you want a fight to erupt!

Just use your imagination. Think of something you want and find a reason why he might use it, then go get it! You won't be taking anything back!!

Happy Holidays,
Chip

Write Right

If you don't know what's wrong here, WordPerfect does. Or if you do know and just don't want to bother with making the corrections or changes, WordPerfect will. In fact, WordPerfect is designed to help you write better and puts the time saving accuracy and advice you need right where it belongs—at your fingertips and on the screen of your Atari ST.

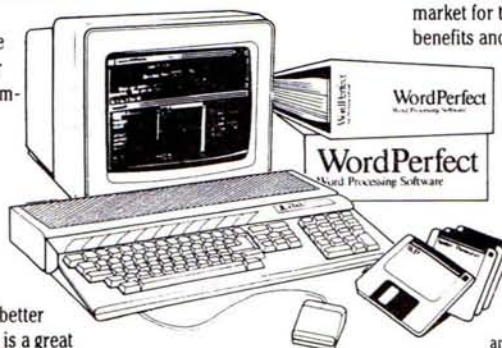
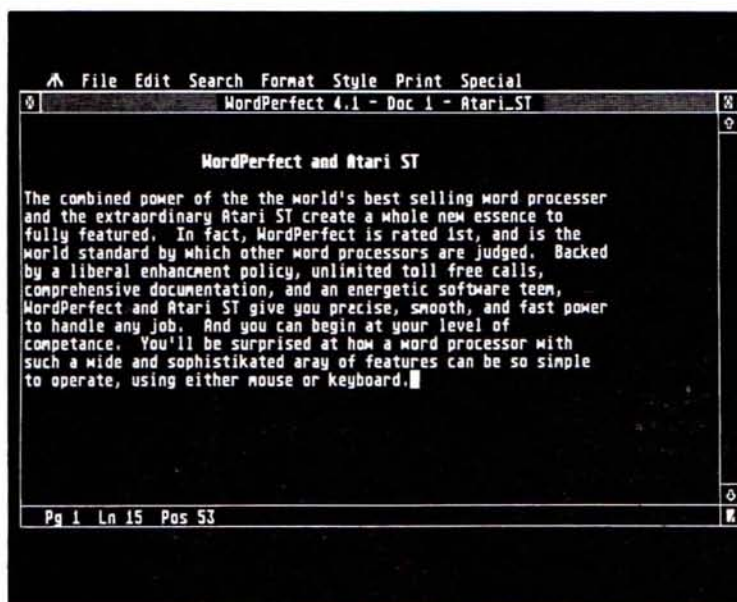
Right Spelling

Go ahead and create your document. Get the ideas out and on the screen where you can look at them, change them around and organize them exactly the way you want. Then call up WordPerfect's Speller with its 115,000 word dictionary, or the custom dictionary you've already created. Highlight the word you're not sure of and the Speller checks it. If it's wrong WordPerfect gives you a selection of correctly spelled words. Pick the right word and WordPerfect corrects it in the text instantly. The Speller will even look up a word with phonetic spelling. You can check a single word, a paragraph, a page or every word in the entire document quickly, efficiently and accurately. The Spelling feature also looks for double words, words with numbers, and gives you a word count. Of course, words can be added or deleted within your main and custom dictionaries as needed.

Right Word

How many times have you asked yourself if there isn't a better word. A traditional thesaurus is a great help in finding just the right word, or leading you into creating a better phrase, but it's time consuming and tedious. That's why many of us compromise and take what's already there.

Enter WordPerfect's Thesaurus. Just position the cursor on the word you're struggling with within the text on your Atari's screen, then call up the Thesaurus. Both synonyms and antonyms are displayed for your



convenient scrolling. And you can do it for two different words at the same time! You can also type in a word from the keyboard. If you still aren't satisfied with the choices displayed, more levels of alternatives are only a mouse click or keystroke away. You can go from synonym, to synonym, to synonym until you find just the right word.

Right Interface

WordPerfect for the Atari ST allows you the option of running from either keyboard or mouse. You can access all features with superb pull down menus and mouse selection or by

equally superb, more conventional menu driven keyboard commands. Combine them any way you want. Either interface is fully supported—you do what is most comfortable for you.

Right Choice

Obviously there are less expensive word processing programs on the market for the Atari ST, but none give you the total combination of features, benefits and support that the WordPerfect system does.

WordPerfect is not copy protected.

Sooner or later you'll want WordPerfect so you might as well start saving time and money now. Don't take a chance on a word processor that won't keep up with your growth or the growth of your business. Buy the best word processor in the first place—WORDPERFECT.

For more information, call us during normal business hours at 1-801-225-5000 or write WordPerfect Corporation, 228 West Center Street, Orem, Utah 84057

The Atari ST version of WordPerfect operates on the Atari 520 ST, 1040 ST and forthcoming Mega ST's. One drive required. (Two drives or hard disk recommended.)

Atari ST is a trademark of Atari Corporation

WordPerfect

C O R P O R A T I O N

PSAN Feature Article

ATARI MEANS BUSINESS

A REPORT FROM THE 1987 COMDEX

By Anita Malnig, START Editor
(ANTIC Publishing Inc., Copyright 1987. Reprinted By Permission)

Las Vegas, November 2nd

Atari intends to give the likes of Sun Microsystems and Apollo Computers a run for the money with **Abaq** (the root word for abacus), the new transputer-based workstation that the company is showing here.

By using RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) architecture, the workstation will operate at 10 MIPS (million instructions per second). The latest graphics hardware and the IMS T-800 -- the Inmos Company's 32-bit microprocessor -- combine to form affordable, powerful personal workstations. A single transputer can deliver over ten times the power of an IBM PC AT. However, there's even greater strength in numbers. You can connect two, 10, 100 or even MORE transputers to create a relatively low-cost computer workstation with the power of a supercomputer. (Talk is that the price will be in the \$5000 range.) When attached to a transputer, the ST or Mega acts as the input/output device for the system. Transputers can be linked via a built-in high-speed serial port to form a multiprocessor array or a local area network.

Helios, the Unix-like operating system, was developed by the Perihelion Company in Great Britain, as was the transputer board itself. The Helios operating system encourages the use of many small programs which work together to create a final product.

Shiraz Shivji, Atari's vice president of research and development, expects that the transputer will be used primarily in engineering and science applications. Included with Abaq will be a very high resolution monitor, capable of four graphics modes: 1280 X 960 in 16 colors or monochrome; 1024 X 768 in 256 colors; 640 X 480 in 256 colors with two screens; and 512 X 480 in 16 million colors plus overlay. No firm delivery date is set, but late 1988 seems to be the most talked-about time frame. From a first-hand view, the crisp, vibrant graphics (such as four separate pictures running simultaneously) were drawing crushing crowds.

CD-ROM FOR ATARI

The exciting CD-ROM player introduced at Comdex can read up to 540 megabytes of data or play music. It connects to Atari's ST and Mega computers through the DMA (direct memory access) channel, a communications port that transmits data at up to 10 million bits per second. At 540Mb, the player can store more data than 1,000 floppy disks or 200,000 printed pages.

Demonstrated at the show is an English and French visual dictionary from Facts on File. It is categorized by topics such as transportation and food: click on the transportation theme and choose from an array of topics such as ferrys, container ships, airport terminals and so on -- all items illustrated. Speech output identifies each image in French and

English. Grolier's Encyclopedia also runs on this CD-ROM, as do audio CDs. Atari has a task force at work now developing more products for this player, which will be available at computer specialty dealers and retail outlets in February 1988, at a suggested retail price of \$599.

ATARI DESKTOP PUBLISHING

G.O. Graphics, in conjunction with Atari, will bring to market a sophisticated desktop publishing program called **Deskset**. This works as a front end to the CompuGraphics typesetting equipment, offering the use of 1,800 fonts. This is not just a desktop publishing program for four-page newsletters and the like: it could design entire publications such as ANTIC and START. It will output to such laser printers as the striking Atari laser printer, also being demonstrated with Deskset. (Look for the next Comdex installment for additional desktop publishing programs for the ST.) Deskset, which **works only on a Mega**, will work within the GEM environment and offers all the standard features of the most sophisticated desktop publishing programs -- features such as character compensation, kerning, columns, boxes, rules and the ability to merge text and graphics. Look for this product mid- to late 1988.

AND... ATARI PCS

The Atari PC1, introduced earlier this year, can be used as a local area network workstation or as a standalone personal computer. It runs at a top speed of 8 Mhz, with a software switch to set the clock speed to 4.77 when needed. The PC1 works with any CGA, MDA, EGA or multi-frequency monitor. Maximum color screen resolution is 640 X 350. The PC1 has a 64-color palette, with a maximum of 16 on the screen at a time. It is expected to retail at \$800.

New to the Atari PC family is the PC2, a dual-speed XT compatible with five slots and hard-disk support. The PC4 is an 80286 microprocessor-based IBM PC/AT compatible machine. It has clock speeds of either 8 or 12 Mhz, VGA-compatible video, four AT-style expansion slots, up to one megabyte of system RAM and is ready for an 80287 numeric coprocessor.

Additionally, Atari is announcing **'Moses PromiseLAN'**, a local area network that can connect up to 17 PCs using off-the-shelf telephone wire. They will also be developing Moses PromiseLAN adaptors for its Mega and ST computers. Thus, the Mega and Atari laser printer will be able to share data with PCs and Apple Macintoshes.



PSAN Feature Article

ST SOFTWARE SHINES AT COMDEX:

Multi-user, Multitasking on the Mega

By Anita Malnig, START Editor

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Las Vegas, November 3rd, 1987

At the very crowded Atari press conference at the Desert Inn on Monday, November 1, Atari announced its entrance into the serious business market with an array of multi-user, multitasking products. The Atari booth itself was crowded with exciting products, interested spectators and busy software personnel. Here's a run-down of what we saw at the Atari booth.

MULTI-USER, MULTITASKING

Along with high-quality third-party developers, Atari will offer multiuser, multitasking and serious vertical applications on the Mega using a Unix-like operating system called **Idris** (developed by Whitesmiths Ltd.). The company, Computer Tools, was and still is instrumental in finding companies whose programs can be ported over from the Unix environment to Idris and porting those programs.

Jefferson Software is now releasing a version of their **Modula-2 Development System** for the Mega to run under Idris, offering a powerful language to complement the multi-user, multitasking operating system.

American Network's **Cash Register Plus**, the first of the multiuser, multitasking applications, is a point-of-sale program that lets you store and search up to 3,000 items. It supports a Star 8340 printer -- small to print out receipts -- and an actual cash drawer. It includes a customer and inventory database and backs up all information to disk. It can support four terminals with all cables attached to the Mega. This is expected to be on sale mid-January 1988 for about \$700 for all the components.

During your inventory search, you may want to do some word processing. There are several word processors to choose from in this Idris environment. From the Tigra Corporation comes **Word Era**, a feature-rich, high-performance word processing package on single- and multiuser systems. It has a Wang-compatible interface and document conversion capabilities. Word Era has the features of leading word processing software and more, including a window environment, voice recognition and voice annotation. It can also set up menus in French, German, Italian and Spanish, and supports a four-user system. Available during the first quarter of 1988, the multiuser price begins at \$895.

Another word processor is **CrystalWriter Plus** from Syntactics, providing a library of model documents for frequently used formats such as letters, memos and reports. An organization can define its own 'style sheet' for documents. The program has 'plain English' commands and can be useful for writers, editors, secretaries, managers and engineers.

Also ported from the Unix world is **Lex**, a combined word processor and database, from Trajectory Software. Its indexed file structure lets you

retrieve the 10,000th record as quickly as the first. You can design your own forms and screen layouts, create short and more extensive glossary items, and do list processing and mail merges. It also comes with a built-in calculator which you can use concurrently as you write or edit. Also available is **Lexet**, which lets you interface the word processor and database with laser printers.

Atari Corp. is handling the networking capabilities through an agreement with Network Research Corp. With **FUSION**, Network Software will give the Atari Mega a complete set of TCP/IP protocols and allocations which have been tested for compliance with DDN/DARPA Internet Protocol specifications.

MORE DESKTOP PUBLISHING

From Timeworks comes the **Timeworks Desktop Publisher ST**. Retailing for \$129.95 this GEM-based program will offer WYSIWYG display, over 1,200 possible type-style combinations, ability to import graphics, and laser printer compatibility. Desktop Publisher ST will be available in the first quarter of 1988.

Soft Logik Corp. announced a new version of its desktop publishing program, **Publishing Partner Professional**. New features include automatic textflow around graphic images, automatic hyphenation and kerning, the ability to import documents from other word processors such as WordPerfect, First Word and Word Writer, more fonts and font manipulation. It will retail for \$149.95.

From ISD Marketing comes **Calamus**, a page-layout and typesetting application. It allows outline fonts and vector graphics that until now could only be processed by expensive Postscript laser printers. Calamus uses these features on both the printer and screen. The screen output can be enlarged up to laser printer resolution. The program offers a spelling checker and hyphenated dictionary, object-oriented graphics, chart forms, and font editors using Bezier curves for designing or changing fonts. Calamus for the Mega will be available in December 1987 for \$349.95.

Michtron offers **GFA Publisher**, a GEM-controlled program with full-featured text editor, automatic text flow and paging, expandable font library and an integrated driver for PostScript.

From Migraph comes the **supercharged Easy Draw**. And **Supercharger**, a companion product to Easy Draw, makes it easy to load graphics from popular paint programs. While not a desktop publishing program, these two combined products let you create newsletters, reports, brochures, etc. You can work with ASCII files, have justified and non-justified text, use onscreen grids and rulers and output to the Atari laser printer.

PSAN Feature Article

LET'S EMULATE

Turn your ST into a Mac with **The Magic Sac Professional** from Data Pacific. The Professional consists of three products: The **Magic Sac Plus**, the **Translator One** and the **Magic Epson Printer Driver**. The Translator One allows the existing Atari disk drive to read and write Apple Macintosh disks and convert data between Mac, ST and IBM PC diskette formats. The Professional is shipping this month with a suggested retail price of **\$449.95**. Typical Mac programs you can run are Macpaint, Macdraw, Excel and Pagemaker.

PC-Ditto is a software-only utility which taps the power of your Atari ST to imitate an IBM PC XT. Programs you can run include Lotus 1-2-3, Enable, Sidekick, Framework and Symphony.

WORD PROCESSING — ALIVE AND WELL

WordPerfect for the ST is out and is called by some the Cadillac of word processors. In addition to a built-in thesaurus and spell-checker, the program has math functions and can create indexes and tables of contents. There are also macros, merge functions and onscreen columns. The product is shipping now for about **\$395** list.

From Microsoft comes the long-awaited **Write**, marketed by Atari Corp. It handles complex business reports as well as memos and letters. It has all the standard text generation, editing and formatting features such as cut-and-paste, creating footnotes, automatic pagination, different font styles and sizes, and it works in conjunction with the Atari Laser printer.

MORE CAD PROGRAMS

Drafix, from Foresight Resources, is now on the market and drawing critical acclaim. It's identical to the 1.00 IBM PC version, supports pen plotters, and runs on color and monochrome Atari monitors.

Coming soon from Migraph is **M/CADD**, a professional engineering graphics design system for the Atari Mega. M/CADD outputs directly to HPGL-compatible plotters and saves in GEM format for output on 9- and 24-pin dot-matrix printers. M/CADD files can be loaded into Migraph's Easy Draw, and you can add more text and either bit-mapped or object-oriented graphics. Suggested price is **\$499**. M/CADD should ship the end of November.

With MichTron's **Master CAD**, you can produce object in 2-D and 3-D using its exclusive concepts of Projection Planes. It uses pull-down menus, dialog boxes, mouse and very few keyboard commands. Expect to see this in early 1988.

DESKTOP VIDEO

From Antic Software in conjunction with Sony comes a desktop video package. Sony's low-cost 8mm video hardware and Antic's video sequencer software create professional-quality 3-D computer-graphics videotapes of up to two hours. The Antic software controls nine functions of the Sony VCR, then adds its own special visual effects such as fades and auto assemble/editing. The 8mm video sequencing software (including custom parallel cables) will be available

in January 1988 from Antic Software. The Sony video equipment is available from Sony.

MORE GRAPHIC FUN

From Neriki Computer Graphics PTY Ltd. in Australia comes the **ZImagemaster**, software with a hardware box to attach to your ST. Hooking up the Polaroid Palette can output DEGAS pictures as Polaroid pictures, and you can hook up a 35mm camera to the Palette. The package yields overhead transparencies and printouts. It will retail for **\$400**.

Antic Software is also showing **Spectrum 512**, its 512-color paint program, which expands the ST's normally limited palette of 16 colors to 512. Spectrum 512 can load and enhance pictures from existing ST software as well as from Amiga picture files. Available now for **\$69.95**.

Animation comes from Antic Software as well with **Cyber Paint**, also **\$69.95**. It emulates the functions of a \$100,000 Quantel Paintbox -- but for computer graphics instead of live video. Cyber Paint is a member of the Cyber family of desktop video products. Its many features include smooth raster tweening along any 3-D path, professional optic effects with planar rotations through 3-D space, and moviola-style cut-and-paste.

MORE BUSINESS BITS

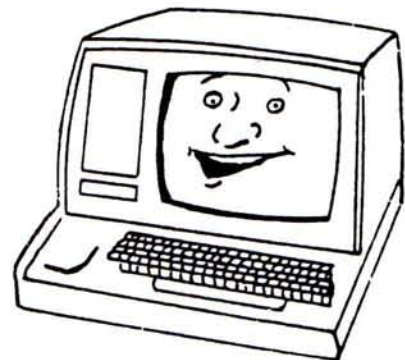
The **Informer** from Regent Software is a multi-table database with presentation graphics. Easy-to-use point and click functions let you create and manipulate up to four databases at once. You can import graphics from DEGAS and NEOchrome... From SBI comes the **Database Accounting Library**, menu-driven with options to confirm, change or cancel entries... Hi-Tech Advisors announces **Super Sales Pro**, a full-featured point-of-sale inventory control software system for the ST. It will accommodate medium- to larger-sized wholesale, retail or mail order businesses. The company will provide free technical support... From Progressive Peripherals comes **Superbase Personal**, a relational database, and the **Logistik time/project management system**... B.E.S.T. Inc. offers **B.E.S.T. Business Management**, an integrated accounting system offering general ledger. Available now, suggested retail price is **\$395**... ISD Marketing, which brings you the well-known VIP, now has the **MasterPlan** financial spreadsheet featuring the GEM environment with pull-down menus, icons, scroll bars and column grabbers. It offers graphics features as well. Also from ISD is an update to **STAccounts**, the integrated accounting package... From Royal Software comes additional low-cost business programs such as **Help Calc**, templates for their **E-A Calc** and **VIP**. Coming soon will be **Inventory Master** for **\$99.95**.

MIDI

Hybrid Arts was showing **ADAP** and **ADAP 2**, the digital editing system. ADAP 2 works directly with a hard disk. Also just released is **Easy Score**, Hybrid Arts' new scoring program.

NEW HARD DRIVE In mid-December ICD will ship its new **100 megabyte** hard disk for **\$1,699**.

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PSAN Feature Article

COMDEX WRAP-UP

San Francisco, November 6th, 1987

By Anita Malnig, START Editor

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Comdex closed its doors today after a five-day convention that attracted more than 90,000 delegates. Exhibitors paid \$27.95 per square foot to the Interface Group for space at the show, which Comdex leased from the Convention Authority for 15 cents a day per square foot.

In addition to the plethora of products at the Atari booth was a variety of items scattered throughout the Las Vegas Convention Center and various hotels.

From Quantum Microsystems Inc., (QMI) comes a low-cost graphics tablet for the ST. The **ProTablet ST** replaces the mouse pointer device with an accurate digitizer tablet and stylus pen. It works with programs such as Drafix, Degas, Easy Draw and CAD 3D. The tablet has a working area of 12.0 x 8.0 inches and a physical dimension of 17.5 x 11.0 x 1.2 inches. It's available now and has a retail price of \$395.

'ChartPak' from Abacus software lets you do business graphics on your ST. Create visual messages from raw numerical data. Use clip art or pictures from paintPro or Degas-compatible programs. It's on the market now.

'PrintMaster Plus' from Unison World lets you design banners, newsletters, letterhead and the like. You can create and edit your own work and use art from the PrintMaster Art Galleries. Use multiple graphics on a single page, use different typefaces and styles and print reverse image copies of iron-on T-shirt decals. Available now for \$39.95.

From Kyocera Unison, Inc. comes the **Kyocera laser printer**. It prints 10 pages per minute, gives sharp text, graphics and barcode styles. It has 79 resident fonts, eight foreign language character sets, plus three flexible, user modified Dynamic fonts for typestyle creativity. It will retail for \$2,895.

From Knowledgeware (distributed by Michtron) comes **'Viva Presents,'** an interactive desktop presentation system. Through the use of a visual construction set represented by icons, the user can put together templates to create a visual storyboard for the interactive presentation he is writing.

'Interlink ST' from Intersect Software Corp. is an advanced telecommunications package. It features autodialing, automatic redialing, password protected remote access, a text editor, background downloading and more. Interlink comes free with introductory subscription packages to GENIE, Delphi, CompuServe and The Source.

Hi-Tech Expressions brings Sesame Street to your children with six preschool computer software learning games: **'Big Bird's Special Delivery,' 'Astro Grover,' 'Ernie's Big Splash,' 'Grover's Animal Adventures,'** and **'Pals Around Town.'** Only \$9.95 apiece.

Programs such as **'Quantum Paintbox,' 'Pro Sound Designer,' 'Pro Midi,'** and **'Pro Drum'** come to you from

Eidersoft, distributed from Computer Software Services (CSS). **Quantum Paintbox** offers a paint program with 4096 colors. **Pro-Sound Designer** is a sound sampling package with 3-3- kHz sampling, record, playback, reverse, cut, copy and more. It retails for \$129.95. **Pro-Midi** is a complete MIDI sample/sequencer for use with Pro Sound Designer, and **Pro Drum** using samples of real drums can create complex percussion patterns. The last two products retail for \$29.95.

From the Supra Corporation comes **'The Supramodem 2400,'** a compact model that supports asynchronous operation at 300, 1200 and 2400 bps. It has an automatic answer/automatic dial, two modular phone jacks, programmable volume speaker and a one-year warranty. It is completely Hayes-compatible and retails for \$179.95. Supra also has a **SupraDrive FD-10,** a 10MB removable floppy disk which connects to the DMA port. It retails for \$895.

A popular game from a new company is **'Dark Castle'** from Three-Sixty, Inc. The company was founded in March 1987 by Thomas Frisina, formerly president of Accolade Software. The company will create, develop and market software for the Atari ST series.

This was a successful, busy Comdex for Atari and we at Antic Publishing look forward to covering the products from Atari and third-party developers as they become available. Look for more Comdex coverage in the February issue of the ST Resource in Antic (on sale January 1988) and the Special Issue #2 (Music and Graphics) of START, available February 1988. Individual products will be reviewed in subsequent issues. As in the two previous news stories, prices and date-to-market were provided when available.

We look forward to bringing you the most up-to-date information about the Atari world. For subscription information about Antic and START, please call 800-234-7001.

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Product Review - ST

STAR TREK: THE GAME

An ST Product Review by Stephane Lavoisard from ST Magazine, Issue #10
(Reprinted from the September 1987 Pokey Press via FASTER)
(Edited and translated by Andre Lafreniere & Alain Plouffe for FASTER)

Star Trek was certainly, with Dungeon Master, the most awaited game since with every new computer show, we could observe a new pre-release version. We've finally received it, surrounded by rumours claiming that this was the software of the 1990s. It's thus with excusable eagerness that I threw myself on this program and I might as well tell you that after I started playing, I found it difficult to stop long enough to write this article.

First, the authors have had the excellent idea not to base their scenario on either the films or the series. Hence, it's an original scenario to which they treated us. Since a while back, numerous spaceships are mysteriously disappearing in a certain part of the universe. The Federation has mandated you to go with the Enterprise to resolve this affair. The loading of the program is such that one gets impatient to see the game. Effectively, after only a few seconds, the digitized voice of Captain Kirk sounds: "Space, the final frontier", accompanied with the familiar sound effects, which are followed by the theme (not digitized this time, because this little folly grabs a lot of memory). Might as well tell you that you'll be thoroughly seduced by this grand presentation accompanied by a superb rendition of the ship. At last, the main game screen appears. *Go Right*

This one is composed of one large display surrounded on two sides with seven smaller screens. The main screen is the flight deck of the Enterprise, digitized for sure, and all the actors of the series are present. If you click on single individuals, their picture appears in the main screen along with the actions he or she is able to accomplish. If the main screen is in one of the mini-screens, all you need to do to bring it back to the main display is to click on it. As you've probably understood, this game is played with the mouse only, which speeds it up and makes access to your information easy.

I click on Sulu, who is the navigator. Three control panels are at his disposition. First, you have the general layout of the area, represented as a spinning 3-D universe which makes it very realistic. You may obtain a zoom view on the regional zone, and even the local area. You only need to click on a solar system to obtain its name and distance. If you then click on Spock, he will indicate if a system is Romulan, Klingon, or Federation. Click again on Sulu to indicate the cruising speed you want.

I chose to navigate at Warp 10, the maximum speed. After a few moments, the digitized voice of Scotty reminds me: "We must slow down or otherwise the ship will disintegrate!" I thus slow down to Warp 8. I arrive in the Zuner solar system, containing 6 planets. I click on a planet in the view of the system obtained by Sulu, and then on Spock to find out what we can expect here. A digitized voice informs me that a message has just been received. I click on Uhura, who tells me that there is a fleet of over 1000 enemy ships in the galaxy. Since Zuner is controlled by the Federation, I am almost assured not to make any unfriendly encounters. On Zuner I, an energy station can be found which recharges my energy for navigating between the interior planets of the system. Zuner IV is a repair station which might come in handy if the vessel is attacked. Lastly, Spock informs me that Zuner IV supports life forms. On the Zuner system plan given by Sulu, I click on Zuner IV to get there at full impulse power.

After a few seconds, a beautiful picture of the Enterprise in orbit appears along with a message from Sulu. I click on Scotty who indicates the remaining amount of Warp energy for travelling between systems, and the level of impulse power for travel within systems. Time to click on Kirk, which advises me to teleport 6 or 7 members of the crew on the planet's surface. The choice is up to you. You'll rapidly discover that having only one person on a planet is near useless. Also select among the equipment found on other planets the one which you will need and then teleport your personnel. The digitized sound of the teleportation is amazing.

Then is the planet surface exploration phase, a primordial aspect of the game, but not with such elaborate graphics as the other parts. The faces of the six crew members are represented along with the object or the person in front of you in wireframe form. According to the nature of the object blocking

(POKEY PRESS EDITOR'S NOTE: The STAR TREK game described here, though unreleased in this country, has been widely seen by just about EVERYBODY who has an ST. How so, you ask...

Bootlegging, old pal. This program has been so widely bootlegged that many people, including editors of various Atari newsletters across the country, are convinced that it's already been released here. I've even seen reviews (and reprints of reviews) of the BOOTLEGGED version in various club newsletters.

Of course, this has undoubtedly been a bit disconcerting to the programmers at Beyond Software, reading reviews of their program (however favorable) BEFORE it's even been released in the U.S. And, according to one columnist in The Atari Journal (out of Miami, FL), the heavy bootlegging has given Simon and Shuster, who will be marketing the game in this country, the idea that it may be pointless to even bring it out here. Hey, if everybody's already got it....

I, personally, have seen a copy of this game, and I have my own opinions about it. And when it's OFFICIALLY released in the U.S.A., I may even review it. The game HAS been officially released in Europe, and Brett Cramer, at the Computer Room in Ft. Lauderdale, has already ordered some copies of the European release to sell to those eagerly awaiting the release version.

But until we at Pokey Press are able to get our hands on a legal, release copy of STAR TREK, we'll have to make do with the following review, taken from FASTER, a Canadian disk-based newsletter. We thank the staff at FASTER for permission to reprint the following, which they took from a French newsletter.)

works, no problem; you move ahead and get to the following obstacle. If it doesn't work, nothing might happen, or your crew members might be wounded. Teleport yourself back on the Enterprise and click on the doctor who will heal the crew, as indicated with a life bar under the person's figure.

Back on the planet, continue until you find an interesting object. Spock often knows what to use it for and you can take it for someone's use or teleport it aboard. Some objects can be used against doors, robots or bombs while others can be installed aboard the ship to increase its resistance, its weapons, etc... It's equally possible to meet on these planets superior races, often friendly, but sometimes dangerous. In this case, it's the way to communicate that you have to select. The doctor offers to simply dialogue, while Spock prefers ESP, and Kirk is often menacing. Most often, the alien will reveal the location of a useful object.

A new message from the Federation makes me more aware of my ultimate goal, because roaming aimlessly around the universe is not too productive. It's right then that the red alert sounds. I click on the main deck and turn off the alarm. I then click on Chekov who takes care of battles. On his screens appear three Klingon vessels. I select the phasers, and click on one of the points on the radar. This puts me in battle mode. The enemy ship in wireframe representation heads towards me. You manoeuvre a red circle which diminishes in size as the other ship comes closer.

You must click on the enemy ship in such a way as to center the firing circle. When you click on the fire button, a shot lands arbitrarily somewhere inside this circle. You will then understand that the circle needs to be as small as possible if you really wish to hit your opponent. After two or three shots, the vessel disappears into space. But after the first few battles, my phasers are completely empty. I then select the torpedoes and head back into combat. During all battles, Spock indicates your vessel's energy level and that of the enemies. I've suffered serious damage and repairs are compulsory. Before anything else, I select Kirk and save my game position, fearing another encounter with the Klingons. I first go to a Dilithium mining complex planet and fuel up on energy for intergalactic travel, on another planet housing an energy complex for travel between planets, on a weapons dump planet where I find torpedoes, phaser replenishment and lastly, to a repair center. All the damage has been repaired and I'm now able to resume my search.

STAR TREK is certainly the most polished game to be found on the ST. The graphics come straight from digitized scenes reworked from the series, the sounds are wisely balanced between digitized and non-digitized, and finally, the interface is very efficient thanks to the use of the mouse and the seven mini-screens. The richness of the game (**STAR TREK** contains over 1000 planets out of which about 450 to explore) makes the potential life span of this program almost unlimited.

... ever to make versions for other computers, it would likely be much less attractive. So to all of you Trekkies, if you want to play heroes, you only have one thing left to do.

SOMETHING NEW AT COMDEX

By Tom Neitzel, S*P*A*C*E

I was sitting this morning reading the executive summary in one of the data processing trade journals (**INFORMATION WEEK**, November 16, 1987) that I receive when I was surprised to see the following paragraph:

"Another interesting Comdex unveiling came from ATARI, which brought out Abaq, a card with four 32-bit T-800 transputer chips developed by Inmos. The T-800 is rated roughly 12 MIPS. A transputer is a chip with both a processor and memory. Abaq features 4 Mbytes of memory and a Unix-like operating system called Helios."

This magazine is published weekly and concentrates on large scale data processing systems and hardware made by the likes of IBM, Unisys, HP, DEC, and Amdahl. Atari seems to have made quite an impression with this machine to be mentioned.

The raw computer power that appears to be on this board is impressive. MIPS (Million Instructions Per Second) is a measure that is used to compare the "horsepower" of various computers. This is a measure of how long it takes the CPU to execute a complete microcode (like a machine language code) instruction.

Mainframes like the IBM 3090 series (essentially the most powerful family of IBM computers) runs at 9 MIPS, and I think the IBM 4381 is somewhere around 2.5 to 4 MIPS (If you are watching Phil, please correct my figures). The 12 MIPS for the Abaq is pretty staggering. I believe that the Abaq is as far ahead of the ST in power as the ST is ahead of the first pocket calculators!

Just comparing the MIPS is a bit unfair because the whole computer system must be built to handle the vast amounts of data. How many I/O channels are there and how fast do they operate? How much main memory is available?

This article noted that this was a card. It will be interesting to see exactly how this will be interfaced with the ST or MEGA ST computer/terminal, if at all.

Rumor also has been that the Abaq was developed by Atari U.K. I believe that this means that the product will probably REALLY be available in the near future.

I really can hardly wait to see one of these cards perform. Maybe I can even justify buying some Atari equipment for work!

MY FIRST TRY AT SHAREWARE

By George Terpening, S*P*A*C*E

If you are writing software you must consider how you are going to get it to the public so everyone can see how bright you are and how great your program is. If you also have a lot of money invested in your computer equipment and would like to keep expanding your system and you also are a programmer by profession, then you try to make your hobby pay off. Well, I am a programmer and one of my two hobbies is my Atari ST computer (and all that goes along with it). My other hobby is bowling. Bowling is the only thing that will keep me from a computer meeting.

Anyway a couple of years ago I decided that I wanted to use my computer to keep track of my bowling statistics. Also about that time, one of my friends became the league secretary of one of the leagues in which I was participating. So I decided to write a program to keep track of all the bowling statistics that the secretary needed as well as those that I was interested in.

Well, to make a long story short, I started designing a program I call **Bowlerman**. Since I wanted to track my own statistics much sooner than I could finish **Bowlerman** (as I got into it I discovered just how complicated the program really would be), I decided to complete a sub-set of **Bowlerman** to do these personal bowling statistics. This sub-set program I called **Bowlerson** (son of **Bowlerman**). I had been approached (or I approached them, I don't remember now) by a company that wanted to market my program when I finished it. Well, I finished **Bowlerson** and the documentation in time for Atari Trek '87 in Seattle. This company displayed a copy of the program, all packaged up nice and pretty. However, they never sold a copy at that time because everyone who inquired about its availability, really was looking for a program like **Bowlerman**. Meanwhile, I continued to work on **Bowlerman**.

When I finally finished the program and started on the documentation, I contacted the company again. But by this time the company (it was a small company) had decided to discontinue operation, and therefore, would be unable to market my programs. I could have approached other companies to market these programs, but I knew how much time I would need to do this (too much!). So I decided to release the programs as shareware.

Since the bowling statistics program has been completed, I have packaged it up and uploaded it to a few bulletin boards. Additionally, I've mailed out copies to several clubs. This program is now titled **BOWLSTAT**, the Bowling Statistician Program. If you find a copy (or want one for that matter) and like it, you can become a registered owner by sending me twenty dollars. This will get you a printed manual and entitle you to any future updates as they occur. I will support the program as required.

The league secretary program will be released sometime this month also as shareware. All that is left to do is to finish the documentation. The program is complete, and the documentation is nearly done, too. The league secretary program will be released in a slightly different manner than **BOWLSTAT**.
(Continued at the Right, mid-page)

ATARI TREK '88

COMING YOUR WAY IN MAY!

Although (as you may have noticed) it is not quite 1988 yet, it IS time to start organizing for Atari Trek 1988.

Atari Trek '88 will be held at the Seattle Center Flag Pavilion on May 14th and 15th. If you were lucky enough to have been there for Atari Trek '87 last May, then you know that the Atari Users Groups in the Puget Sound area were the hosts to one of the most interesting, entertaining, exciting, and successful Atari Computer Shows held anywhere in the country in 1987. This was no accident, but rather was due to the skills and hard work of a very dedicated team made up of people from each of the Atari Users Groups in the area.

We are in the process of putting together another team like that for Atari Trek '88, and this year we want YOU to be on it. That's right, YOU. Don't wait for somebody else from your club to fill that spot, they might not do it. Jump right up and volunteer yourself. You say you don't know anything about putting on a computer show like this? That's fine, we have veterans to show you the ropes, and your new ideas and fresh perspectives may be just what we need to make Atari Trek '88 even better than AT '87. We have lots to do and not a great deal of time to do it in, but with YOUR help, we will get it done.

There will be a meeting of the Atari Trek '88 committee on Thursday, December 10th and again on Thursday, January 7th. Contact me or your club officers for more details, and don't forget,

If YOU don't volunteer, it may not get done!

Dave Hanthorn,
Chairman, Atari Trek '88
(206) 232-3009

(My First Try At Shareware - Continued)

It will be distributed as a fully functional program, except that any data entered for "substitute" bowlers (i.e., anyone other than one of a team's original five members) will yield incorrect statistics. Interested bowling league secretaries/officials are encouraged to "set up" their leagues using this program. If found useful and to their liking, users may become registered owners by sending me forty dollars. I will, in turn, send them a copy of the program which yields correct statistics for all bowlers. I also will send a copy of the manual.

I have a lot of time invested in this program (ask my wife). If no one becomes registered for either of the programs, then my support of the programs will be very limited. On the other hand, if there is a good response, I will give full support and keep improving the programs by adding features.

If anyone is interested in the programs they can contact me (see the S*P*A*C*E ST librarian phone number) either by phone or at one of the S*P*A*C*E ST meetings or at the general meeting. So long for now and good computing!

Product Reviews - ST

THE TEN BEST OF 1987 Public Domain ST Software

By George Terpening, S*P*A*C*E

Since this is the season of the award and 'REAL' football is no longer around, I've decided to pick what I think are the best programs that I have seen since I became the ST librarian for S*P*A*C*E.

It is hard to pick out the best because there is so much good software out there to choose from. The criteria that I've used to pick with are the following:

- The program must be useful or entertaining.
- The program must be free or or at least shareware.
- The program must be nearly bug free.
- There must be documentation support which must be clear and useful. If there is good on-line help, then the document can be less complete.
- The support provided by the programmer in fixing bugs and adding new features.

UTILITY CATEGORY

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1. TUTTLE | Hard disk backup utility |
| 2. ST WRITER | Word processor |
| 3. ARC | Archive program |
| 4. ARCSHELL | ARC shell |
| 5. WORD400 | Word processor accessory |
| 6. DISKTOPM | Disk catalog prg |
| 7. HDSCAN | Hard disk utility |
| 8. DSLIDE | Delux slide show |
| 9. FORMAT3 | Floppy disk formatter |
| 10. PROED | Text editor |

GAMES CATEGORY

- | | |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 1. MONOPOLY | The same as the board game |
| 2. STONEDLX | Stone age deluxe |
| 3. WHEEL2 0 | Wheel of fortune |
| 4. SLOMACH | Slot machine game |
| 5. MILEGAME | Milestone game |
| 6. STARTREK | Several versions |
| 7. LARN | Adventure game |
| 8. FOOTBALL | Board football game |
| 9. POKER | Game of poker |
| 10. ADVENT | Original adventure game |

Well, those are my picks. If you don't find your favorite game or utility on the lists, then you are free to compile your own and take them to your next club meeting and discuss their respective attributes with the other members. Good luck!

REVIEWS AND SUCH, PART 2 Looking At New ST Software

By Al Cummings, STARBASE

The big news of the month was the Comdex show in 'Las Vegas'.

Look for that story elsewhere as the clubs turned down my offer to cover the show in person. There have been some new things show up, however, and the next 6 weeks should be better... if the promises are kept.

As stated last month **Word Perfect** for the ST is out. List price is \$395. The local dealers are selling it lower than that, and I have seen it marked between \$249 and \$350. The best deal is if you can qualify for the student price of \$99. The local dealers have application forms and more info. No one has said much one way or the other about actually using this product (and again the clubs are being short sighted and tight pursed about buying me a copy to review and use to improve the look of the newsletter. Something about not knowing how to use what I have now!).

Now for something I have gotten a copy of and have used quite a bit. I just brought my third copy of **Wizard's Crown**. This one runs on the ST, the others being for the Atari and the Apple. Each one gets better and SSI does a good job of improving the line with each program released. I have reviewed the game before and really enjoy playing it; which really helps because this is one long game. The protection scheme is the best there is - next to none at all. When the game first loads it asks a multiple choice question and gives the page to look on for the answer. After that you never know the game is protected. You can make copies of both disks and you cannot play until you have created your own data disk. Very well done. The graphics are much improved and play is fast with no disks swaps (that really hurts the 8-bit version). Disk access happens frequently, but does not take long; and the play is fine. Read the manual for hints and look and read everywhere as most of it will be used sometime. You can use the mouse for everything except choosing numbers and such, or the faster option is to use the keyboard with the choices shown on the screen. I like this game a lot, and maybe I will finish this time.

Also on the shelf is **Beyond Zork**, the fourth of the Zork trilogy. (I love it when they do that.) With what I have seen and heard, this game really works well on the ST - with windows and such and; it is also bigger than all the others combined, which would be some kind of awesome. I might have to break down and try Infocom again.

Well that is about all for this month as the mind quit working as it always does this time of night or is it morning now? More next time on these same pages.

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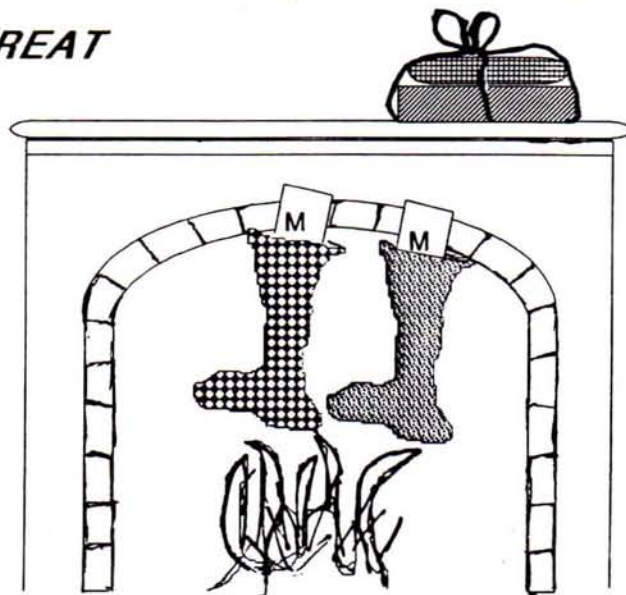
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PSAN Feature Article - ST

voltage divider. When the light level exceeds a certain, pre-set level, the comparator's output will go high.

The reference voltage is set at 2.5 volts with a voltage divider using two 1K resistors. The input voltage is produced by a voltage divider which is formed by a phototransistor and a 1 megohm resistor. When a certain light level is exceeded, the output of the comparator will go high. To set the device at a different level, you will have to adjust either of the 1K resistors that form the divider. You may insert a 25K potentiometer or experiment with fixed resistors. The more resistance that you insert between the center of the divider and ground, the more light needed to make the comparator's output go high. With less resistance between the center of the divider and ground, less light will be needed to make the comparator's output go high. Figure 3 is the schematic of a joystick version, while Figure 4 is the schematic of a parallel port version.

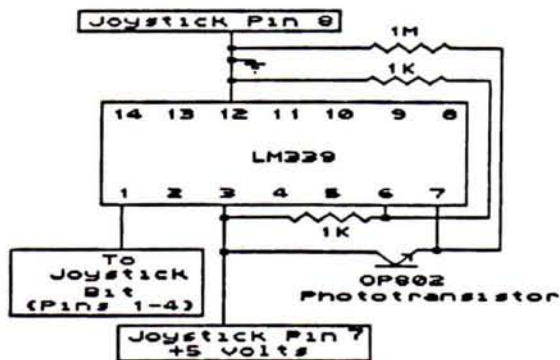


Figure 3

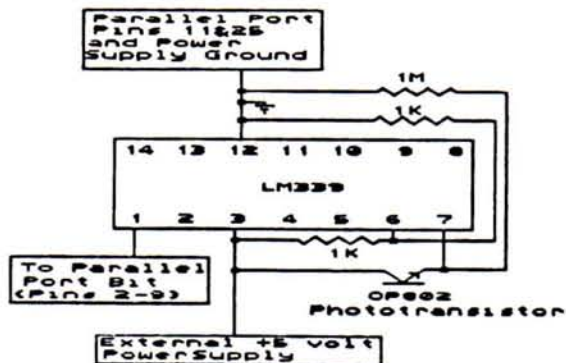


Figure 4

You must now decide which port to send the data into. The parallel port is by far the easiest to use. The cartridge port needs both an etched cartridge board and a data buffer. For this reason, a cartridge port version will not be discussed, as that goes beyond the scope of this article.

If you choose to use the parallel port, you must simply read the data from the port. I will refer to the use of the lower four bits for the sake of this particular discussion, but any bits can be used. If you are programming in C, use the **Bconin** command to obtain the parallel port data. If any of the data bits read are low, the corresponding comparator outputs are low. If any of the data bits read are high, the corresponding comparator outputs are high. *Make sure that parallel port pin 11 is tied to ground or it will get "stuck" as the computer times out.*

Following is a short program you might try to read data from the parallel port.

```
unsigned int data;
```

```
main()
{
    while(!Conis()){data=Bconin(0);
        printf("%u\n",data);
    }
}
```

To read the parallel port in BASIC, try the following program.

```
10 X=INP(0)
20 PRINT X
30 GOTO 10
```

If you want to use the joystick port to read the data, you will need to simply read location 3953. This will return the value of the four bits of joystick port. Remember to also connect the circuit ground to pin eight of the joystick port.

Earlier, it was noted that the ability to read analog data was missing from the ST computers. The following portion illustrates the use of an analog to digital converter to read exact levels of an analog signal. It would be well to tackle the projects in the first section before taking these on, as those were easier and will give you some construction experience on a simpler level.

The heart of the hardware is an ADC803 analog to digital converter. This particular converter has a built-in clock that is set by an external resistor and capacitor. Very few external parts are needed. One problem is that the converter needs to be strobed in order to put the digital data on the eight data output lines. For this reason, the joystick port cannot be used unless you can find a way to strobe the ADC803. *Rather, the parallel port is the best choice, because the operating system automatically strobes pin one of the port when reading data.*

The cartridge port is another alternative to the parallel port. The ADC803 is directly interfactable with the cartridge port so no data buffer is needed. The only problem then is obtaining the cartridge board. This can be ordered from a company called **Bigfoot Systems**. Their address is: 2708 East Lake Street, Minneapolis, MN. I have etched my own boards, but it is infinitely easier to order one from Bigfoot Systems.

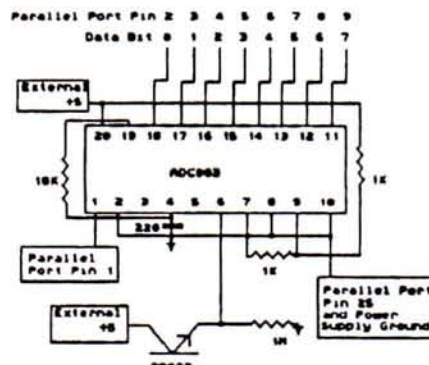


Figure 5

LIVING WITH THE XEP80 -The Next Chapter-

A Subjective Review of Atari's New 8-Bit 80 Column Hardware
By Wally Wong, BRACE [CIS 75126,3463; GENie WWONG]

(AUTHORS NOTE: Some of the followers of ZMAG, the electronic newsletter, will recognize this review from ZMAG issue #79. I had intended this to appear first in the November 1987 issue of the Puget Sound Atari News. Unfortunately, due to BBS difficulties, the PSAN production staff was unable to obtain the article by the publication deadline. Since it would be a month before any readers would be able to view this review, I decided not to wait and uploaded it to GENie, where I believe ZMAG obtained it.)

The original review has now been updated with the latest of my experiences, primarily with the printer port, and has expanded on my personal views..)

Yes, folks, it's finally here, the long awaited 80 column adaptor from Atari, the XEP80. Actually, it's more than an 80-column display module, it's also a parallel printer interface. There are some delights and some plights you should be aware of as well as a plethora of potential programming hacking that could keep some Atari enthusiast awake many a night.

The Atari XEP80 Interface Module is an 80-column video display controller and "standard" parallel printer interface for all 8-bit computers with a minimum of 16K RAM. The XEP80 looks just like the Atari SX212 modem, same size, dimension and color - minus the lights on the front panel. The XEP80 comes with just about everything you need; video cable to connect the module to a composite monitor (monochrome recommended), power supply adaptor (Egads! Another one, that makes six tucked under my desk!), the module, a 20 page owner's manual, a warranty card (that no one I know sends in), and a 5 1/4" distribution disk, all for \$79.99, list.

A nice long cable runs out the rear of the module that connects to your computer via joystick port one or two. Most will probably elect to use port two and keep the other available for a joystick. No problem except one of the demo programs (WINDOW.BAS) will only work if the joystick is in port two and the module plugged into one. The power switch is located in the rear and a tiny diagonal window emits a subtle green light on the front panel when the power is on. The video cable is a simple cable with RCA male jacks on both ends. One end connects to the rear of the module and the other to your composite monitor (sorry, no TVs allowed).

The parallel printer port is a standard DB25 parallel female connector found on the STs and IBM type systems; not an Atari 850 or P:R: Connection connector. The reason for using DB25 connection is for "standardization" which means you can obtain a printer cable from just about any computer store (but we will make our purchase at our local Atari vendors, right!!), and not be hand-cuffed to "Atari Only" vendors who would be the only ones carrying 850/PRC parallel cables. If you wish to use only the parallel printer port, hold down the shift key while booting the disk and continue to hold until its done loading. This will allow output to the printer maintaining

the normal 40 columns through the computer video port or RF. Here is what the owner's manual says about selecting the printer port:

"When you start up your system with the XEP80 Module, the module is prepared to direct output to a printer through the parallel port (P1:). Specifying P2: directs output to the ATARI 850 Interface Module; P3: outputs to the 1025 Printer; P4: to the 1020 Color Plotter; P5: to the 1027 Printer; P6: to the 1029 Printer; P7: to the XMM801 Printer; and P8: to the XDM121 Printer."

There is a "PRINTER.BAS" program on the distribution disk. This allows you to make adjustments to the printer interface configuration, i.e., light or heavy translation and device unit; P1:, P2:, etc. The XEP80 also sports an internal 2K buffer for printing. Nice touch. (Don't throw away your old printer interface just yet, I'll tell you why in a bit.)

Turn on the XEP80, monitor, disk drive(s), insert the XEP80 disk (of course you made a copy of the original, right?) and turn on the computer. The XEP80 handler comes as an AUTORUN.SYS file so it will boot up automatically. If your monitor is adjusted to give you a full screen with a normal 40 column screen (like mine), the first thing you will notice is the bottom half of the last three characters of the "READY" prompt of BASIC in the upper left hand corner of the screen. If you type "DOS" to get to the DOS menu (DOS 2.5 is included on the disk), the first line of the heading is tucked somewhere beneath the top of your monitor chassis. The next thing you will notice is the bunch of tiny characters (relative to 40 column characters) on the screen! Folks, you now have an 80 column display. The characters are quite readable on the BMC, Technika and Commodore 1702 color composite monitors. The display looks GREAT! on a monochrome composite monitor (once I got mine to work properly).

The characters are defined within a 7x10 cell (7 wide x 10 high) compare to 8x8 cell used normally. I think this is the reason for the truncated display at the top of the screen; the characters are taller than normal and pushing the top of the display. Now, this is just a guess, I'm no video display wiz. This can be corrected by adjusting the vertical width. Correcting for 80-columns will create a smaller vertical screen when you return to 40 columns. This is okay if the vertical adjustment is located on the front of the monitor or easily accessible, if not, you'll have to decide if you want to make this adjustment and then find someone qualified to do it.

The XEP80 can actually display up to 256 character columns but only 80 are available at a time (Hm, doesn't AtariWriter Plus scroll in 256 columns??!!). The demo program "WINDOW.BAS" and a joystick illustrates this aspect nicely. Remember, the module has to be plugged into port one and the joystick in two for the program to work. If you want

Product Review - 8-Bit

Neutral Notes:

(1) Be sure you try out the monitor with the XEP80 before you buy.

(2) Some monitors have a 40 or 80 column switch either inside or outside. This switch might have to be set to obtain a decent display (as suggested by Darryl, Atari Tech.).

(3) If your monochrome monitor looks fine in 40 columns but you get flashes of indecipherable dots, try adjusting the horizontal hold. Again, this adjustment might be internal so think before you jump.

(4) The XEP80 supports bit mapped graphics, 320x200.

(5) The XEP80 handler replaces the E:, S:, and P: vectors in the Handler Address Table.

Personal Touch:

I believe this is the single product that could make or break the 'only a game machine' mentality of the eight bit Ataris. Due to the inavailability of XEP80 compatible software this item is going to sit around on vendors shelves for a long time. At this point, the only people expected to buy the XEP80, would be die-hard 8-bit software developers and hardware hackers like me.

I see the XEP80 as the key to the 'next' wave of Atari 8-bit software. Don't be disappointed with Atari or software publishers. Almost all the software available now were developed long before Atari conceived the XEP80 design and I don't know if the XEP80 could have been designed to work with 'yesterdays' software.

The sales of the XEP80 must be low or distribution is scarce by the communications I come across on some of the paid BBS's. I heard of one user working on a VT100 program to take advantage of the XEP80. I've been tinkering around with a simple wordprocessor for the XEP80. If we can get enough hackers with these modules, we'll start to have something to use with our XEP80's. Atari is working on the 80-column AtariWriter and its soon to be released. I don't see software publishers beating the doors down to give us something to use with the XEP80, especially with the sales of the modules at a trickle. It's the old 'Catch 22', the software publishers won't develop software for the handful of XEP80s that have been sold and Atari won't be able to sell the XEP80s because there's nothing to drive it.

Another major flaw with the XEP80 is the parallel printer port. It may be fine and dandy with the 80-column AtariWriter but users are going to have problems with existing software. The 'defacto' standard Atari interface is the 850, no questions about that. Atari should have either designed the printer interface with the 850 in mind, ie. the Serial IO port, just like ALL the other interfaces. Users are going to be forced to buy another printer interface if they want to run Print Shop or any other programs that are SIO designed. In my opinion, they should have left this out and lower the price or designed it with the SIO in mind. The solution would

probably be for someone to modify the OS with the proper printer handlers and burn them into EPROMs.

To qualify my negativity about the printer interface more than the 80-column aspects of the XEP80- the 80-column design is 'new' and I didn't expect everything, or anything at that, to function with it. On the other hand, mostly all the existing programs that communicate to printers were written with the 850 in mind and for the XEP80 to deviate from this standard is wrong. By deviation, I'm referring to the installation of the printer handlers via software. So, I'll keep my 850, thank you and concentrate on the '80-column.'

The 80-column if very nice and sharp and lends itself to some great software ready to be written to take advantage of it. If the 'new' software is done well and released in reasonable time and the advent of the new disk drive and maybe a drop in price, the Atari XE will be the most affordable, versatile and serious computer system on the market. Imagine the day when new computer buyers choose the Atari because it's AFFORDABLE and DOES THE JOB WELL!.... and it has great graphics and games. We know this already, now it's time for the public to find out.

If you have any questions or comments about this review or the XEP80 in general, you can reach me on CompuServe or GEnie as listed above. If you are planning to include this review in your newsletter, I'd appreciate a copy of the newsletter or just a note indicating so.

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THE SENTRY

An ST Role Playing Game

Reviewed by Skip Sharrow, A.T.O.M.

It all began innocently enough that evening. I had just returned from Software Unlimited with a new game I saw on the counter and casually without thinking picked it up and asked what the new game was. The reply was a non-committal explanation that it was like a chess game.

Well, if it was like a chess game why the name "The Sentry"? Letting my curious nature get the best of me I asked Dave Shoemaker, the Co-owner of Software Unlimited, if I could rent the program on the Rental Preview program that Software Unlimited has in their Store on Wheaton Way in Bremerton, WA. I explained that I wanted something to write about for the next issue of the PSAN Newsletter. When he heard that I was going to write a review on it, he said go ahead and take it for the review with no rental charge.

(Alternate Reality, The Dungeon - Concluded)

and other future scenarios as these are released. The reason you cannot take a character back into the City, as far as I understand it, is because the person who created Alternate Reality the City, Philip Price, was no longer available to work on the Dungeon scenario (and I assume all future scenarios?). Alternate Reality the Dungeon is programmed by Dan Pinal, Ken Jordan, Jim Ratcliff, and Rick Mirsky. Aside from the fact that you cannot re-enter the City, the Dungeon is superior to the City in many (but not all) ways. This is a difficult task, as I feel the City is an excellent game, but the Dungeon is even better. If for no other reason than you actually have PURPOSE.

Here are a few game tips not found in the manual:

1. Mapping may be very time consuming, but is essential particularly in mazes. A maze that seems impossible without a map can be child's play with one.
2. Check out every corner of every room! Many hidden "goodies" are there to be found.
3. If the Devourer eats something you need to complete a quest, don't fret. The next master thief you fight should have it.
4. When you first start out STAY IN OR NEAR THE LIGHTED AREA!
5. Whenever you get something good, SAVE your character! That way if you die, you will still have the stuff you got.
6. If you get teleported and don't know where you are, use graph paper to map the area anyway. You will eventually be able to transfer this onto your regular map.

That's it! Be seeing you in the Dungeon!

After a few more minutes of yakkin' at Dave I headed home to try out this new game. And this is where it gets very interesting! I fired up my trusty 520 ST and slipped in the game disk. After it loaded I was catapulted into a Strange Universe of 10,000 worlds, where the only force is pure energy. I realized things were't to be as they had been before.

For you see I was no longer my former self. I had been transformed into a Synthoid and that my new purpose in life was to battle "The Sentry" and her agents the "Landgazers" and attempt to de-throne her in each one of these 10,000 worlds. Now that I knew what was ahead of me I looked around the landscape and knew that to be caught in the sweeping gaze of the Sentry for any length of time meant certain death to me by loss of energy!!!

But all was not as bad as it seemed I could draw energy from trees, boulders, meanies, landgazers, and even the Sentry herself as long as I was at a high enough altitude in the landscape to see the squares they were situated on. I could do this by "Absorbing" them as needed. To gain altitude requires that you create boulders to stand on. Then by teleporting yourself to a higher plateau you absorb the body you left in your original position to regain the energy you expended while teleporting to your new location.

What's that?!! My Sensor has detected that I've been spotted and the Sentry has me in her gaze!! Oh no, my pulse quickens, where to go? Oh yes, behind the mountain of course! With that I teleport myself to another location away from that energy draining stare of the Sentry's. Am I safe yet? Nooo, I'm not, now She's transforming one of the trees into a MEANIE. Quick before he spots me, I've got to absorb him or he'll send me thru Hyperspace and I'll lose precious energy and maybe even my current altitude. Zzzzzzzzzzz yah, I got him!! Skip, hey Skipp!! Muh?

The voice of my wife pulls me slowly back to reality and I realize it was all just a great game. The game is good in that you have to plan out your moves as in Chess. The graphics are fair, panning your view is a bit tedious, but the game is one with a different flavor than the majority of the Shoot or be killed Types. One annoying thing I noticed was that the disk drive didn't shut off after loading the needed information and I hate to see my disk drive whirling away when not needed, not to mention the wear and tear on it!!! Other than that I'd recommend it to anyone to enjoy.

My thanks to Dave Shoemaker and his Co-partner Victor Cutrell of Software Unlimited for the use of the game for this review. I know where some of my leisure time money is going this month!!

If you're in the Bremerton area and would like to preview software for your computer before you buy it, give Dave or Victor a call at 206-479-2935, and see if they might have the program in that you're interested in. That's it for now everyone.

LINECOMP

An 8-Bit Line Comparison Utility

By Richard "Goldfinder" Finegold, BRACE

A while ago, I gave a program to a fellow user, to see what he could do with it. He added a few features, took others out, and made many cosmetic changes. Unfortunately, some of the features that he took out were ones that I found quite worthwhile. Additionally, some of the features that were left in were some how changed in such a way that they no longer worked. Since this was a massive program with a fair amount of control-characters, I didn't want to print out two copies of the program and try to compare them. Enter LineComp.

This had happened to me a while back, and I had made a similar program. But it wasn't as flexible, didn't look as good, and didn't work as well. Most importantly, I couldn't find it.

So, I had to write a new one. It took me several hours (about half of one to write it and make it work, another hour to make it more flexible, and one more to make it look nice externally, plus an extra half hour to make the listing look nice) to write, but I think the results are well worth it.

TYPING IN LINECOMP

There are 82 lines, including REM's. The only important (called) REM is line 500. If you're lazy (like I often am), you can skip the REM lines, and change 'PRINT' to '?'. But I would like it if you'd at least type in the first two lines, and the rest of the REM's if you're going to distribute it.

RUNNING LINECOMP

RUN the program and respond to each prompt with a filename in the form of Dn:filename.ext. The first two prompts (source and changed file names) must be answered. As for the other four, enter a RETURN ('null line') if you don't want a response, or E: (or S:) if you want it directed to the screen. Or if you have some bizarre infatuation with benchmark testing, answer the last four with RETURNS and pull out your stop watch.

File1 changes in: -- This is an ENTERable file for converting the changed version (file2) back into the original (file1).

File2 changes in: -- This is an ENTERable file for converting file1 to file2.

All changes in: -- Unique lines in file1 are prefixed with a '<' character, and unique lines in file2 are prefixed with a '>' character. Take a look at the file to see what I mean.

Unchanged lines in: -- This file contains what escaped persecution. It is ENTERable, but why bother? I guess you could call it a semi-useful bonus.

After you've finished with those, answer 'Y' if you like what you see, and the program will run. Or hit 'N' and you can answer them again, using your previous answer as a default (hit return for no

change, enter a new answer with spaces to overwrite the old answer if you want to change it. It's really easier to do than to describe).

GENERAL USAGE OF LINECOMP

This program should work with all files which start with line numbers (BASIC, MAC/65, perhaps others), have a maximum line length of 255 characters, and end with an Atascii carriage return (155, 98, 10233, 10011011b, whatever you want to call it). I recommend that if you are going to use this, do not renumber the changed (file2) program (because it won't work well at all, and probably won't turn out what you expected unless you are the deranged type, which most programmers tend to be). If you are using BASIC XL or BASIC XE, I urge you to use a SET 12,0 to disable indenting (like if you changed a looping structure). A SET 5,0 could be thrown in to disable the mixed case listing, but if you do both listings in mixed case, it really isn't important.

Note that the files to be compared should be in LISTed form (e.g. LIST "D1:SOURCE.LST") to work. Otherwise, it won't find any line numbers and will be very confused. I recommend using a RANDisk, if you have one.

There are two main uses of this program. One is to see what someone did to your program. The other is to send out updates. If you have modified a program, and someone else has the version that you started with, you could just run LINECOMP and send them the ENTERable file ('File2 changes in'), saving a lot of upload/download time. Note that the 'File1 changes' and 'File2 changes' files include deleted lines (take a look at the output file to see what I mean) while the 'All changes' file only includes added or changed lines.

As for errors... if you get an Error 161 (too many files open), and you're using a DOS 2-type DOS, POKE 1801 with a number between 3 and 7, depending on how many files you want to use. For example, if you answered all six prompts with disk filenames (starting with Dn: rather than E:, S:, or P:), you'd want to POKE 1801,6. Save this DOS using 'M' option from the DOS menu and reboot, and try it again. Or better yet, get SpartaDOS 2.3 or later (if you have an XL/XE computer) and don't worry about it.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

You'll have to excuse me on the terse variable names. On the other hand, there are only nine variables to keep track of. The POSITION statements were used so I wouldn't have to change the left margin. Lines 710 and 750 were added as afterthoughts to account for deleted lines. To tell you the truth, I got the program fully working, renumbering each time (with BASIC XE), and then renumbered it with a word processor (TextPro) to look nice (along with changing '?' to 'PRINT').

THE TEN BEST P/D PROGRAMS FOR THE 8-BIT ATARI

By Jerry Cross (G.A.G.)

(Reprinted from the Michigan Atari Magazine, September 1987)

Recently I have been reading articles in some Atari magazines that have listed the most popular Atari commercial programs. And just like with the movie reviews, I disagreed with most of them. So, I figured it was time I put out my own list.

Over the past two years, I have looked at hundreds of public domain programs. Some were just fantastic, and others (many, many others) were not worth the disk space. But there are a number of programs that really stand out. These are the programs that should have been made commercial. But the author, in a brief fit of generosity, made them public domain. These are the programs that sit in the "privileged" area of my desk, since I always seem to reach for these programs.

This list is mostly for those people who just purchased an Atari. These are some of the most useful and fun programs available, and all are available from usergroups at next to nothing. These programs will put you on the right track until you can afford to purchase the exact programs you are looking for. It would also answer the often asked question, "So what can you do with your computer anyway?"

1. **TEXTPRO** by Mike Collins and Ronnie Riche. Once upon a time, COMPUTE magazine published an excellent word processing program called SpeedScript. This program was a blessing to Atari users! At that time, there were very few good p/d word processors available, and you ended up purchasing one of the commercial packages like AtariWriter. Several months later, TEXTPRO was released. This program took up where SpeedScript left off. It added several powerful macro features, RS232 support, additional commands, and allowed the use of several Atari DOS's. You were no longer restricted to DOS 2.5! In addition, the complete package included detailed documentation, help screens, and several useful sample macro files. To date, this program fills all of my home wordprocessing needs. There are a few features missing, and it would be nice to see it support the additional memory of the 130XE's. But this program is just the thing for the average Atari user.

2. **EXPRESS** by Keith Ledbetter; actually, any EXPRESS program... well; actually, any program by Keith Ledbetter is powerful! EXPRESS is probably the most powerful, feature packed terminal program for the Atari 8-bit computers. There are currently 3 versions (1030/XN301, 850 compatible, and MPP). Recent upgrades now feature text windows, R-time cartridge support, CRC-Xmodem downloading and lots more. EXPRESS's dialing menu offers an auto-calling feature that is extremely useful. Just mark the BBS's you want to call, and the program will call them, one at a time, until it comes across a BBS. No more constantly typing in numbers when a BBS is busy. There is simply not enough room here to describe all of the features. Still not impressed? Well, Atari has chosen this program to be included with their new 1200 baud modem, and Supra now packages EXPRESS with their modems equipped with a Supra interface. So, is there any doubt about adding this to the top-ten list?

3. **PBS CHESS**. This program features excellent graphics and gives you a fair competitor. Granted, this is not for the very-advanced chess players, but it will play a good game. This is an excellent program for new players.

4. **FIRST AID TUTORIAL**. This is a sound/graphics demo-tutorial that teaches kids CPR. With the help of an Adult (to answer kid's questions), this program is an excellent way to instruct children in the art of giving life supporting first aid in case of emergency. I let my brother borrow this program for his Cub Scout pack, and it was a big hit! This program was originally a commercial program, but was released into the public domain. The graphics are excellent!

5. **TURBO-BASIC**. This program comes all the way from Germany. It is a complete package that includes the TURBO-BASIC language, Compiler, sample programs, and complete documentation. Programs written in Turbo, then compressed, are extremely fast. Additional commands give you better graphic control, and far more power than Atari BASIC. A must have for beginner programmers!

6. **ACTION P/D RUNTIME PACKAGE**. This program is just now making an impact in the Atari community. Many older Atari users purchased the ACTION language from OSS, but until now were unable to share their programs with other users. It was necessary to purchase the ACTION cartridge in order to run other ACTION programs. The only alternative was to buy a Runtime package from OSS (not cheap!). But now, there is a public domain version. By using this package, you can compile the Action program into a binary load program that will run on any Atari computer. This should open up a flood of great new public domain programs.

7. **LASERTYPE**. This program is an educational/game program. The object is to shoot down falling "letters" before they touch the ground. By hitting the matching letter on the keyboard, you activate a laser that shoots away the attackers. Sounds boring, huh? Well, add some great music background, excellent graphics, and several difficulty levels, and you now have a great typing practice program. Let's face it, if you want to learn to type fast and accurate, the only way is to practice. At least now it's not so boring.

8. **CESDEMO**. This may not be your idea of a must have program, but every time I see this graphic demo I'm amazed. This program was shown a few years ago at the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago. Atari used this program to "draw" people into their booth. (It worked!).

9. **DANDY**. OK, this is for you game players. This is a multi-level maze game. The idea is to search each level for a "key" that will open a door to the next level. But you must fight your way through a variety of monsters. You will need a quick joystick hand and lots of practice.

(Concluded at bottom of preceding page.)

| Color | Taste | Sip | Effect |
|--------|----------|-----|------------------------|
| SILVER | BITTER | D | WEAK POISON |
| SILVER | BITTER | C | INTELLIGENCE (+1) |
| SILVER | PLAIN | C | CURE MAJOR WOUNDS |
| SILVER | SWEET | C | CHARISMA (+1) |
| WHITE | ALKALINE | C | MILK |
| WHITE | ALKALINE | C | HEALING |
| WHITE | ALKALINE | DD | POISON |
| WHITE | BITTER | DD | SLOWNESS |
| WHITE | SALTY | C | HEAL ALL WOUNDS |
| YELLOW | BITTER | C | NOTICEABILITY |
| YELLOW | DRY | DD | WEAKNESS (-1 STRENGTH) |
| YELLOW | PLAIN | C | CURE WOUNDS |

For sipping: D=danger, S=safe, DD=dangerous. If you are 'unsure' try sipping again.

There are many more things I could tell you about the City, but they are already talked about in great detail in the manual. Personally, I think that Alternate Reality--the City is an excellent value. I do, however have a few gripes:

1. The program allows the use of joystick or keyboard for moving, which is ok. But since you have to go back to the keyboard for encounters and such, I found it easier to just use the keyboard. But why in the world did they have to make it so that you cannot leave a bank without using the joystick? This is the only time I need the joystick, and I think it is silly to need it then.

2. Sometimes, when it's dark or raining, it is difficult to see the name on the building you are about to enter until you are entering it. I wish they had made it so you could just hit a key to abort entering, instead of having to load one side of the disk, flip it over and load the other side, and then leave the building.

3. If you drop a weapon, you cannot pick it up again! If you drop the wrong one, you are just out of luck! (and the same goes for your armor)

4. Speaking of armor, you can only have one suit of armor. When you find new armor, you can pick it up, but you have to get rid of the old armor. However, there is no way to look at your old armor to see if it is any better than what you could pick up (I tend to be forgetful about what kind of armor I'm wearing).

5. If your character dies, it is gone for good! Unless of course you made a back up. Making backup characters is time consuming and takes away from the enjoyment of the game.

6. If anything at all happens, such as a power outage, or someone pulling the plug and making the computer go down, your character is lost! (this includes hitting RESET!)

If any of these seem like major set backs, they are only minor in comparison to the great fun I have had with this game. My only other complaint with this, is that there seems to be no real goal. I hate to quit playing a game just because I am bored with it, but that is the case here. The main object, it seems, it to make your character strong enough to survive in the Dungeon--the second scenario in the Alternate Reality world. Oh, you want to hear about the Dungeon -- now? Well..... (EDITOR'S NOTE: see Alternate Reality - The Dungeon, also in this issue!)

USING THE LAWLESS 576K

800XL UPGRADE

By Earl Davidson, Albany, GA

Recently I upgraded an 800XL to 576k using Thom Lawless' board and instructions. I wanted the extra ram so that I could load all the programs, utilities, etc. that I use regularly into the ramdisk and have almost instant access to everything. I soon found that there were problems with BASIC, and, since I use BASIC almost exclusively and also prefer AMODEM 7.5 for communications, I wanted to be able to turn BASIC off and on at will and still have access to the ramdisk without re-booting. I talked to Thom and explained my situation. Thom soon had a revised wiring diagram in the mail and I installed it Tuesday night. Preliminary tests indicate that this set-up works great with BASIC XE from OSS. I have not found a combination that works properly with Atari BASIC. (ED.: After writing this review, Earl has installed the 'AUTO BASIC SWITCH' featured elsewhere in this issue and Atari BASIC works fine, as does Basic XE.)

My system consists of the 800XL with 576k, two 1050 drives with US Doublers, an 850 interface and Avatex 1200hc modem. I use Sparta DOS 3.2d. Programs used on a regular basis are AMODEM 7.5, TextPro 2.5, ARC12, ARCX, and DISKCOMM as well as various BASIC programs and utilities. I've switched from Atari BASIC to BASIC XE. An additional advantage of BASIC XE is a 23k buffer for AMODEM.

I use a STARTUP.BAT file to boot my system. This file calls RD23.COM to create the ramdisk as D8:, leaving 64k of memory available for BASIC XE. The ramdisk has over 3500 sectors available. Next, several subdirectories are created on the ramdisk and, finally, about 1500 sectors of files are copied from drives 1 and 2 to the ramdisk.

I then place a disk with Sparta DOS 3.2d and the RD23.COM file in drive 1. This disk contains another STARTUP.BAT file which calls the RD23.COM file with this command: D:RD23 D8:/NE. If I have to re-boot, this initializes the ramdisk without formatting it, so that all files previously loaded remain in memory.

A utility file, COLD.COM, by Craig Thom, is sometimes used to re-boot the system without turning the computer off. Another utility, OSSXCART.COM, from the ICD BBS, allows the BASIC XE cartridge to be turned on and off. Occasionally the system will exit a program and be in Atari BASIC. The Sparta DOS BASIC ON/OFF command is then used to turn it off.

My computer now stays on continuously. I just turn the drives and monitor off. Whenever I want to use the system, all files are in the ramdisk and ready to go. I do have to be careful to have the BASIC XE cartridge turned off whenever I run a machine language program. While not perfect, it is the most convenient set-up I have used for the Atari system. Maybe not as nice as an M10 and a hard disk - but much cheaper.

I'd like to thank Thom Lawless for a fine upgrade. His article, detailing the additional wiring for my system, can be found elsewhere in this issue (ED: 'The Auto Basic Switch'). I'd also like to thank John Oakley for his advice and the loan of a power supply that will handle the 576k of ram (my Atari supply wasn't quite strong enough). This was my first real hardware project and I couldn't have done it without the guidance of Ron Goodwin of Goodwin Electronics - who taught me how to solder. Thanks also goes to Craig Thom of Atlanta for providing numerous utilities for Sparta DOS.

Club News

PARTICIPATING PUGET SOUND AREA USERS GROUPS

ATOM

ATARI ON-LINE MODEMERS

| | | |
|---------------|--------------|----------|
| PRESIDENT | Skip Sharrow | 697-2706 |
| EDITOR/TREAS. | Roy Smith | 377-2523 |
| BBS SYSOP | Andy Eklund | 697-3581 |

Meets: The first Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM at Software Unlimited in Bremerton. Call any officer for details.

Mail: 5553 Oceanview Blvd. NE, Bremerton, WA 98310.

BBS: STORMBRINGER BBS, (206) 697-3496, 24 hr., 300, 1200, 2400 baud. Currently operating on an 8-Bit system with a 20 MEG HD and running BBS Express software.

TREASURER/EDITOR'S NOTES

by Roy Smith

Well here we are going into another Xmas season and everyone is looking forward to looking under the Xmas tree to see what's in store for this year! I think I said pretty much the same thing at this time last year, hoping my better half would take the hint and put that promised 'ST' under the tree. But alas, not to be....maybe this year by chance??

Things that have been happening on the modem scene is no. 1, the new Amodem 7.4 program that is set-up for the new Atari SX212 modem (1200 Baud). I just received the disk and am still testing it out, and putting it through it's paces....I'll let you know how it comes out next month (I am trying it with the SmartTeam 1200). Andy is still working on the new BBS board format and should have it on-line shortly (an 8-bit, running two 20MB Hard Drives.....how's that for some file storage!!!). Of course, we all know he's been saying that for most of the summer....but rest assured he's getting there, and I think it will be worth the wait, when you see it (you have to remember we are also competing with the hunting season -- I wonder if he got that 8-pointer yet...?)!!

A.T.O.M. is still in its infancy, and is experiencing growing pains, as all newly formed clubs will. There has been much discussion on the topic of meetings and how they should be conducted. We have some members that favor the local meeting type concept, while others are wanting to hold all meetings on-line (via the Stormbringer BBS), with all votes also taken on-line. This would enable the 'long-distance' members to ensure their voice is heard on all topics that effect the user group. Another topic of discussion has been a request for a reduced membership fee for those members that do not desire to subscribe to the PSAN Newsletter. These people only want access to the club functions, library and Message Base. These topics need to have much more discussion from all of you out there to ensure that the club goes the direction that you the member want it to go. To get your two cents in on these subjects, log onto the Stormbringer BBS and voice your opinion on these topics in the A.T.O.M. Sig.

As to club funds, I am opening a checking account, and we have approx. \$85.00 in the account, after we have paid SPACE for the Oct. & Nov. Newsletters. Skip is currently in the process of organizing both the ST and the 8-bit library and should make some progress in the next month. If you have a request for some software now, get in touch with one of the officers via E-mail on the Stormbringer, and we will do everything we can to help you out.

In and around town we have rumors of a couple of new BBS's starting up. Skip is currently working on getting 'ST Express' for his ST and going on-line. He states it may be a month or so until he is organized enough to get going, but he will be working hard at it to ensure a great BBS! Wayne Boivin of the KC-ACES out in the Belfair area is also trying to come on-line with an expanded 8-bit using BBS 2.0. He is experiencing some problems in establishing his message bases and his help files. Anyone interested in giving him a hand can give him a call at 674-2352.

Well that's about all for this year....we hope ya'll have a very Merry Christmas....and a Happy (and somewhat sober) New Year!!!!!!

Happy Modeming !!!

later days.....

...RB

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*****
*****
**                                     **
**      A.T.O.M. User Group          **
**      =====                     **
**      Poulsbo, Washington          **
**                                     **
**      Club BBS -- Stormbringer BBS **
**              697-3496             **
**                                     **
*****
```

B.R.A.C.E.

BELLEVUE/REDMOND ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

| | | |
|------------------|---------------|----------|
| PRESIDENT | Jim Yee | 643-9697 |
| VICE PRESIDENT | Richard Coate | 547-0460 |
| EDITOR | Wally Wong | 641-1866 |
| TREASURER | Joe Asaif | 746-0737 |
| SECRETARY | Gary Skelton | 454-7488 |
| 8-Bit LIBRARIAN | Joe Mraz | 747-2433 |
| 16-Bit LIBRARIAN | Rich Coate | 547-0460 |
| BBS SYSOP | Everett Tsang | |

Meets: 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month at 7:00 PM at the Lake Hills Library, 15228 Lake Hills Blvd, Bellevue, WA.

Mail: P.O. Box 70097, Bellevue, WA 98007.

BBS: BRACE BBS, (206) 232-6932, 300 and 1200 baud. Call for operating hours.

Dues: \$15 per year.

BRACE MEETING MINUTES

October 12th Meeting

Submitted by Gary Skelton, Secretary

BRACE president Jim Yee opened the meeting and requested that any new persons in attendance present themselves of which there were two. Jim then told them of the purpose of the club and the benefits of becoming members. It was announced that the annual BRACE auction would take place at the meeting of October 26 with Joe Mraz and Vic Albino being the auctioneers as they have done in the past. It is also the time of year to

Club News

I am afraid that I won't be at the December meeting as I will be down in California checking out what sort of support there is for Atari's in Silicon Valley while I am on vacation. So if you have heard anything or are interested in what's up give me a ring and I'll see what I can find out from Atari Base in person.

Well that's all for now.

Alan

LIBRARIANS' REPORT

By Kandy Mollan and Alex Ancheta

The infamous boot screen has been completed and was demo'd at the October meeting. Since that time it has been installed on disks 3, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 49, 53, 55, 56, 64 and 65. If you have any of these disks either bring your old disk to the next club meeting or contact the 8-bit librarian for a free update.

Right now putting the screen on the disks is fairly easy, as long as the screen stays basically the same. The ultimate goal is to come up with a utility package that will enable practically anyone to convert the graphics screen of their choice, from a popular drawing program, into a boot screen that could be put on any disk.

The major topic at the October meeting, for the librarians was, Rich Pratt of Isletech, has agreed to stock our club disks in his store. It is predicted that the disks will be available in late January or early February 1988.

Also some new disks have arrived, (thanks Jim Chapman), an SX212 disk for use with Atari's new modem WITHOUT an interface unit (8 bit only). Also DOT-MAGIC by the Cryptic Wizard. NEWDOS 2.5+ by T. Patrick, and CODEBUSTER, a disk editor/disassembler. Well that's what's new in the library, some really good stuff. Some of these will be demo'd at the next meeting, come on down and take a look.

UPDATE YOUR DISK,
Randy and Alex

S*P*A*C*E

SEATTLE PUGET SOUND ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|----------|----------|
| PRESIDENT | Jess Lantz | 473-2420 | Tacoma |
| VICE-PRESIDENT | Cindy Bowman | 248-2238 | Seattle |
| SUB-GROUP PRESIDENT | | | |
| ST PRESIDENT | Robert Smith | 941-5537 | Fed. Way |
| HARDWARE SIG LDR. | Greg Pringle | ----- | Tacoma |
| CORRESPONDING SECT'Y | Nick Berry | 759-1473 | Tacoma |
| RECORDING SECT'Y | Cindy Bowman | 248-2238 | Seattle |
| TREASURER | Tom Neitzel | 473-0187 | Tacoma |
| LIBRARIAN | Jim Chapman | 582-4269 | Tacoma |
| ST LIBRARIAN | George Terpening | 941-7155 | Auburn |
| MEDIA LIBRARIAN | Blake Herring | 564-3265 | Tacoma |
| PROGRAM CHAIRMAN | | | |
| EDITOR | Chris Carson | 565-8189 | Tacoma |
| BBS SYSOP | Robert Smith | 941-5537 | Fed. Way |

Main Meeting: 1st Saturday of the month at 6:00 PM at the Computer Co-op (the A.P.P.L.E. Co-op sales store), 212 SW 43rd St., So. Renton, ph 251-6787.

Tacoma Sub-Group: 2nd Saturday of the month at 10:00 AM at the South End Neighborhood Center, 7802 So. L St., Tacoma, ph 591-5098.

ST SIG: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at 6:00 PM at Butler's Computer Service, 28717 Pacific Highway So., Federal Way, WA, ph 941-9096.

Hardware SIG: 4th Saturday of the month at 10:00 AM at the South End Neighborhood Center, 7802 So. L St., Tacoma, ph 591-5098.

BBS: S*P*A*C*E, (206) 941-2824, 24hr., 300, 1200, 2400 baud.

Mail: P.O. Box 110576, Tacoma, WA 98411-0576.

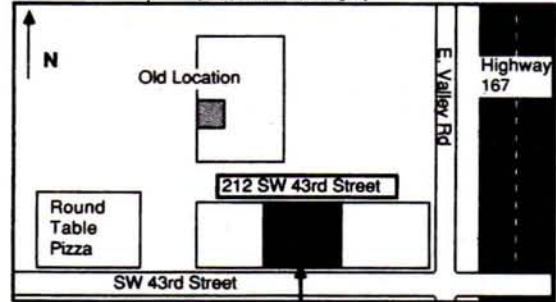
Dues: \$15 per year. **Size:** 250+ members.

S*P*A*C*E MEETING NOTICES

 * The annual ELECTION OF OFFICERS is slated for the *
 * JANUARY 2nd MAIN MEETING. NOMINATIONS are set for *
 * for the DECEMBER 5th MAIN MEETING. Get involved!! *
 * *****
 * Prizes awarded to attendees at ALL Main Meetings! *
 * *****

NEW MAIN MEETING SITE

(Corrected map!)



Computer Co-op

A DEAL FROM ANTIC!!

HOT! HOT! HOT!

BY Tom Neitzel

S*P*A*C*E just received a special subscription offer from the publisher of Antic magazine, James Capparell. Antic magazine will rebate \$25.00 for each disk subscription made through our user's group. The offer appears to be geared toward 8-bit owners but who knows what will develop in the future. The rebate is made directly to the group, with the money to be used for any purpose. S*P*A*C*E members will be glad to know that the club will just reduce the price of the subscription (allowing you another way to recoup your membership if you do not like pizza).

A 12 month disk subscription to Antic normally costs \$79.95. S*P*A*C*E members will be able to subscribe for only \$54.95, or about \$4.60 per issue including the disk - not too bad a deal for all.

We need a minimum of 5 orders to qualify. If you want to subscribe just make a check out to S*P*A*C*E for \$54.95 and give me the name and address you want it sent to. All orders must be made by March 1, 1988. I will mail in the orders each time I accumulate 5 or more payments.

If you already subscribe to Antic you can also take advantage of this offer. Your subscription will just be extended. They also will make some type of adjustment if you want to upgrade a magazine only to include disk.

This offer is being made to all Atari users groups with each being able to choose how to handle the \$25.00 rebate. Contact a club officer to find out the details. If your group officers have not received the offer, I can send copies of the letter so that all can take advantage of this deal.

SUPPORT YOUR CLUB

Puget Sound Atari News-December 1987



Best Electronics

2021 The Alameda Suite 290
San Jose, CA 95126
408-243-6950

Fall Specials



400/ 800/ 1200/ XL/ XE Cartridges

Spinnaker Educational Games Kids on keys
(Ages 3-9), Fraction Fever (7-Adult), Kinder Comp
(3-8), Face Maker (4-12), Delta Drawing 4-Adult
Alphabet Zoo (3-8) Reg. \$15 Sale Price \$10 each

MPP Assult Force 3D Game Cart/Disk \$5
A repeat of our sell out sale! Miner 2049 \$5
Parker Brothers Astro Chase (400/800),
Q-bert, Frogger, or Return of the Jedi \$8 each
Atari Star Raiders or Centipede Reg \$12 Sale \$5ea
Rocklan Games Wizard of Wor, Journey to the
nets, Gorf (400/800) Deluxe Space Invaders \$5ea
MPP Smart Terminal 4.1 Modem Cartridge \$5

New 8 bit items!

New operating system for the XL/XE computers
Has resident mini dos, ram disk handlers, 25 new
user features. The only legal alternative to
the stock OS. by Synergy Concepts \$49.95
(Best Electronics is an Authorized Distrubtor for
Synergy Concepts, Xenia, Wizztronics products)
As seen in Antic/Anlog and Mid Michigan Atari
show the Xenia Research Bar Code Reader \$159
Midi Max midi interface for Atari Computers \$225
Kids on Atari A good book for getting into Atari Basic \$5
Color TV Tunner for Composite Monitors \$45

520ST/1040ST

New World Software 520ST/1040St 2.5 and 4 Meg
ram upgrade board (less meg chips) \$139
(Best Electronics is an Authorized Distributor for
New World Products)
1 Meg D Rams 100 ns \$20ea 120ns \$19ea
Computes ST Technical Notes Guide \$18.95
Monitor Master for dual ST monitors \$55
3 1/2 Blank tractor feed labels \$6 per 100 qty
5 1/4" drive cables (24 edge pin connector) (PC Ditto) \$ 20 ea.
ST null modem cable (850) \$15
ST null modem cable (No 850) \$12



Universal Items

Microstuffer 64K printer buffer \$52
Parrallel Printer Switch Boxes:
2 computers to 1 printer \$35
2 computers to 2 printers \$45
4 computers to 1 printer \$45
Gemini NX-10 Black ribbons \$6.75
XM801/SM804Red,Brown,Blue Ribbon set\$29
Panasonic 1080-1090 Red,Green,Yellow or
Brown,Blue,Purple 3 ribbon set \$27
3-15" coiled joystick extension cable \$7

Hardware

16k Eprom cart \$5 w/one 2764 soldered in \$6
OSS Compatible 16K Bank Select Cart(2-2764s)\$10
MPP 600XL Plug in 64K Expansion Module \$24
MPP 1100 Direct Connect Printer cable for
the 400/800 computers Sale \$22

MPP Micronet (Time share one disk drive/
printer) with up to eight Atari computers \$149
MIO 256k to 1 meg Upgrade Slip Ram Chips \$4ea

Hardware Upgrades(chip sets+instructions)

New upgrades by Tom Lawless 320K/576K
(130XE Compatable) 800XL or 1200XL \$45/\$75
Scott Petterson 65XE to 130XE 320K Mod \$37
Rich Brown/Eric Jorgensen new Avatex 1200
Speaker Mod \$15, 130XE 320K/576K \$30/\$60
600XL Color Monitor Mod \$12,600XL 64K \$15
800+ Rev. D 256K \$37.50, 400 48K \$12,1200XL
OS to 400/800 OS \$12, 800XL/XE 256K \$3
Coming in! Atari Light Pen by Tom Lawless

Specials

Atari Family Finances Program (disk) reg \$12 \$8
Video Switch box control center, switches up to
five separate components (VCR's,dish,
video games, computers,cable) to your TV. \$20
1050 Disk Drive w/free Word Processor \$189
130XE Computer (ten only) \$129
Atari Home Filing Manger Program reg \$20 \$12
Atari SX-212 300/1200 Modem \$99.95

New Collector Items

Atari cups in
stock! White china cup with two black 2" Atari
logos and names or 2 ST 1040 Computers \$5ea
New Collector items coming in!
1" high black on white sew on Atari symbol and
name. This patch turns any "T" shirt, polo
shirt, hat, into an Atari item! 5 patches \$5
Custom made Atari Jewelry! 3/8" gold pladed
Atari Fuji symbol with tie tack mounting \$5

Future items new 2600 games never seen in the U.S., Gyrruss for the 5200

Club News

STARBASE MEETING MINUTES

November Notes By Wilma Crawford

Our Friday the 13th meeting was called to order by our President Rob Hendershot. Omar was sick so I took on the 8-bit library. The officers reports were given and new visitors were asked to introduce themselves. We had 3 new guests in attendance and one joined the club. Welcome David Helland our new 8-bit user.

Let me take a minute to tell you I had a baby girl; she was born on November 5th. Her name is Shavonne Carlise and she weighed in at 8lbs. 20ozs. If you were at the meeting you know she attended her first Atari meeting at 8 days old. Our future member hasn't touched the computer yet but she smiles at the monitor.

Our December meeting will be at Alf's Pizza in Lynnwood. Come and have some fun playing games and eating pizza. We will have a big room so bring a computer and your favorite game.

We now have 8-bit blank disks for sale at the meetings they are 10 for five dollars. Terry is working on getting the 16-bit disks, they will sell for eleven dollars for 10.

Terry also has the 16-bit introduction disk available for new members. Thank you Terry for the hard work you've been doing for STARBASE.

I tried to do the 8-bit demo on Awardware by Hi Tech Expressions but the program kept crashing in Rob's disk drive. I hope it goes better the next time I try to demo something.

On the 16-bit machine we had 2 demos. We demoed some pictures created on the new art program Spectrum 512. The pictures are truly magnificent with all the colors that are possible on the screen at once.

The other demo was done by James Parker. He demoed Printmaster Plus which is a Printshop like program for the ST. It's an excellent program for those of us who like to create cards, calendars, and banners. Thank you James for the demo.

Have a wonderful holiday season and see you next month, Wilma.

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

By Wilma Crawford

We have two new disks in the library they are:

#191 Antic Disk for November

#192 Antic Disk for December

The sales of the new blank disks did very well at the meeting. I hope we can continue to bring you the best in public domain and blank disks. We brought in 116 dollars in sales this month. The money is being used to buy blank disks for the 16-bit library.

Next month we will have another door prize drawing so come and be with us at Alf's so you can win a new piece of P.D. software of your choice for free.

Do any of you have new 8-bit P.D. software? If you do bring it to the next meeting and get a blank disk or a disk from the library back.

That's all there is for this month, see you at the next meeting,

Omar and Wilma

STDIO

ATARI ST COMPUTER USERS GROUP

| | | |
|------------------|---------------|----------|
| PRESIDENT | Dave Hanthorn | 232-3009 |
| VICE PRESIDENT | Vic Albino | 788-2736 |
| SECRETARY | Jim Van Horn | 340-9898 |
| TREASURER | Jolene Bolme | 882-1536 |
| EDITOR | Joel Check | 788-9837 |
| DISK LIBRARIAN | Mike Check | 828-0258 |
| PRINT LIBRARIAN | Laurie Miller | 340-9898 |
| PROGRAM CHAIRMAN | Roger Bedell | 828-0281 |
| BBS SYSOP | Mike Check | 828-0258 |

Meets: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 7:00 PM at Data IO, 10525 Willows Rd., Redmond, WA.

BBS: STDIO, (206) 822-4085, 24hr., 300/1200 baud.

Mail: STDIO, P.O. Box 872, Redmond, WA 98073.

Dues: \$15 per year.

* Newsletter submissions can be uploaded to our BBS, *
* brought to meetings, or via any acceptable method. *

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Dave Hanthorn

There have been many changes at STDIO in the last few months, including many new officers, a new meeting night, a new mailing address, and the club BBS being down (but now back up). Happily, our membership has (for the most part) been able to stay up with this change, and we have kept things rolling despite the turmoil. For anyone that has been inconvenienced by these things, (especially the meeting night change) we do apologize, and promise to try to keep things as stable as possible for awhile. In the meantime, we have had some good meetings, and have plans for even better ones to come.

For example, on Tuesday, December 1st, we will be holding our "world famous" Graphics Arts Contest with prizes galore and fun for all. Then on Tuesday, December 15th, we will be having a gala Christmas party with refreshments and representatives from the local Atari dealers showing us their best wares for Christmas giving (and getting), so bring your favorite Christmas cookies to share with your friends at STDIO.

We will be starting out the new year on January 5th with elections of officers, so be thinking about how YOU will serve STDIO, and run for office, or volunteer for one of the appointed positions. We also will be having a surprise software demonstration that evening. And on January 19th, we will be holding the first ever STDIO auction, so bring along that unused software, hardware, books, or other stuff to donate to the auction, and don't forget to bring some cash or your checkbook so that you can bid on those "treasures" you are sure to see for sale.

Overall, it has been a pretty good year for STDIO and the Atari community, and next year looks like it will be even better. I'm looking forward to sharing the joys of Atari computing with all of you in STDIO in 1988. *In the meantime, have a great Holiday Season, and I'll see you at the meetings.*

Dave Hanthorn

SUPPORT YOUR CLUB - BRING A FRIEND TO THE MEETING!

SEASON'S GREETINGS

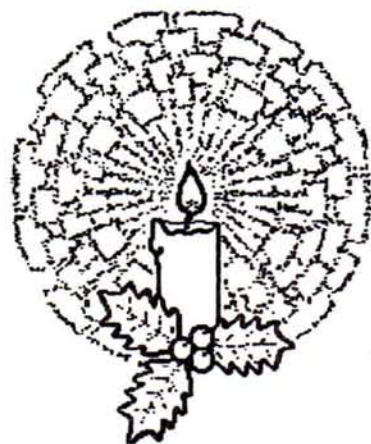
from

Xanth Corporation

Have a

Merry

Christmas



A Happy

New

Year



And A Safe Holiday Season

Xanth Corporation 14188 H&ZBth #185 phone 286-643-9697 BBS 286-562-8128